

# Pardoned Felon Nominated For McCormick Sheriff

**MCCORMICK (AP)** — A pardoned felon won the Democratic nomination in the hotly contested race for McCormick County sheriff, defeating a coroner charged with trying to fix the election.

Sixty-eight percent of the county's 3,439 registered voters cast ballots in the runoff election Tuesday.

George Reid, a 33-year-old process server in the sheriff's department, defeated Coroner Jack Keown, 46. Reid had 1,228 votes, or 52 percent, while Keown had 1,120 votes, or 48 percent, according to Virginia Edmunds of the county auditor's office.

Reid faces no Republican opposition in the Feb. 17 general election. Barring a write-in

candidate, he will replace Jimmy Gable, who is serving six months in prison for embezzling two U.S. Treasury checks.

Surrounded by dozens of supporters, Reid shook hands and accepted congratulations, but refused to talk to reporters.

"I ain't making no statement tonight. I don't feel like it," he said, but added he might talk today, "whenever I feel like it."

Keown fought through a crowd of more than 100 people in the courthouse Tuesday to shake Reid's hand. He later said the race came out "about like I expected."

Tuesday's election was the second step in filling the office. In a special primary Dec. 30, Reid received 957 votes, while Keown got

659.

Reid, who acknowledges he does not read well, recently was pardoned of a felony grand larceny conviction.

He was convicted in 1974 of stealing an impact wrench from a McCormick car dealership and was sentenced to six months in prison, suspended on service of 18 months probation. He was pardoned by the state Parole and Community Corrections Board on Nov. 12, one day before he filed to run for sheriff, according to records.

Reid has twice failed to complete the state Criminal Justice Academy's basic training course, and because of that was unable to make arrests as a deputy. State law would

allow him to make arrests as sheriff.

Keown was working as acting sheriff in November when he was arrested on charges of offering Reid \$1,000 to drop out of the election.

Coming in third with 464 votes in last month's primary was Don Neal, a retired police officer from Polk County, Fla., with 32 years in law enforcement.

About 60 percent of the registered voters cast votes in the primary.

Besides Gables' conviction and the records of the candidates, the race also has drawn attention because of the troubles of the town's newspaper editor, Ken Fortenberry.

Fortenberry is editor of the McCormick

Messenger, a weekly paper with a circulation of 2,000. He has published unfavorable stories about the sheriff's department since coming to McCormick in 1985. His home was rocked by two explosions of gas-filled balloons in November and December 1986.

Four men from Lincolnton, Ga., were arrested in connection with the explosions.

At a preliminary hearing in McCormick on Tuesday, Judge W.R. Cantrell dropped the felony charges of conspiracy to damage property against Lewis M. Cunningham, 21; David M. Martin, 19; Michael D. Ashmore, 20; and Robert L. Partridge, 17.

But a grand jury still will consider misdemeanors charges against the men.

## Voters Recall Omaha Mayor From Office

**OMAHA, Neb. (AP)** — Mayor Mike Boyle began his final days in office today after voters reacting to his alleged abuse of power made him the first mayor in city history to be recalled.

With all but 334 absentee ballots counted in Tuesday's special election, 55,275 people, or 56 percent, voted for Boyle's recall, while 42,832, or 44 percent, voted to retain him.

Boyle campaign manager Jim Crouse said he had expected the mayor to lose, but by a closer vote. Crouse said the election was "more like a trial than an election, with the voters as jury. It appears they made up their minds before they had the evidence."

Boyle did not appear at his campaign headquarters Tuesday night. Telephone calls to his house were fielded by an answering service.

"We're trying not to gloat," said Jim Cleary, spokesman for the recall group Citizens for Mature Leadership. "There's a sense of sadness, but it's difficult not to be happy. All these volunteers worked so hard."

The Douglas County Election Commission staff will start a canvass of the recall ballots Thursday and will then have 10 days to certify the results.

With certification, City Council President Steve Tomasek will become interim mayor. The council would then have two weeks in which to pick someone to serve the 2½ years left in Boyle's four-year term.

Boyle is the first mayor to be recalled in the history of Omaha, Nebraska's largest city with 340,000 residents.

He campaigned vigorously to keep his job, pointing to improvements under his administration, including better streets, a top bond rating and downtown development.

Over the weekend, he accused opponents of a "mud-slinging smear campaign — a hate campaign."

Cleary, who runs a public relations business and was a Creighton University classmate of Boyle's, said his group made every effort to wage a fair campaign.

The recall grew out of a long squabble between Boyle and the police department. It began in 1981, the year he took office, when he complained about seeing police officers standing outside a go-go bar.

Last year, Boyle complained when police issued traffic citations against his 19-year-old son and when his twin 17-year-old sons were arrested for allegedly soliciting prostitution. The twins' cases went into confidential juvenile court proceedings.

The mayor fired Police Chief Rober Wadman on Oct. 3 after the chief refused to sign disciplinary papers against officers involved in a 1985 drunken driving arrest of Boyle's brother-in-law, John E. Howell. Boyle said the arrest was an attempt to lure him into interceding illegally for Howell.

Boyle admitted that some of the criticism against him was justified, and apologized for some harsh comments he made against opponents, remarks recall leaders cited as evidence of his improper behavior.

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